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ABSTRACT

The Association of American Colleges believes that the present pattern of federal spending for higher education through project grants should be supplemented by broad grants for instructional purposes to be expended at the discretion of the institution and suggests: (1) federal institutional grants should be made to colleges and universities as institutions of higher education serving the general welfare; (2) support should be available to all eligible institutions of higher education for expenditure at their discretion within the generally accepted definition of instructional services and departmental research; (3) institutional grants should support necessary quantitative expansion of higher education and should encourage, as well, qualitative improvement in instruction; and (4) to be eligible for an instructional support grant, the institution should be regionally accredited. In addition, the Association believes that federal institutional grants for the support of basic instruction offer the best prospect for sustaining and improving American colleges and universities. (Author/KE)

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Federal Institutional Grants for Instructional Purposes

A STATEMENT BY
THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN COLLEGES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 1968

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

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ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN COLLEGES

Richard H. Sullivan, president

This document represents the official views of the Association of American Colleges as determined by its Annual Meeting on January 17, 1968 which adopted the following two resolutions:

VII. *Be it resolved* that the Association of American Colleges, cognizant of the rising costs of higher education, believes that these costs cannot be offset by present methods of public and private funding of colleges and universities. State and local governments and private philanthropy must provide increasing support for higher education; but the federal government must be prepared to make a larger commitment of its resources than it does at present, and it must be prepared to commit these resources to different purposes.

Specifically, the Association urges the federal government (1) to expand its program of grants for academic facilities and to ease the matching requirements for such grants; (2) to establish a comprehensive student aid plan that will emphasize grants toward the cost to the individual of tuition and other fees; and (3) to establish a system of institutional grants for the support of general instruction in colleges and universities.

Be it further resolved that the Association pledges itself to work through its Board of Directors, commissions, officers, and staff, with other concerned associations toward the early development of specific legislative proposals to these ends, to be presented to the Executive Branch and the Congress.

VIII. *Be it resolved* that the Association of American Colleges approve in principle the statement, *Federal Institutional Grants for Instructional Purposes*, as approved by the Board of Directors on 4 November 1967, and that it commend this statement to the attention of Congress and the Executive Branch of the federal government as well as to the concerned general public.

FEDERAL INSTITUTIONAL GRANTS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES

A Statement by THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN COLLEGES

There are three commonly accepted functions of institutions of higher education: research, service, and instruction. Yet, with the exception of the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963, the bulk of federal funds has gone to the support of research or for the purchase of services.

Through research grants and through contracts for services to be performed the federal government and undergraduate colleges have been brought into many useful relationships which have proved beneficial to both parties concerned. For example, grants from the National Science Foundation for equipment to be used in the undergraduate instruction in science can strengthen the offerings of many of our colleges which could not otherwise compete with the facilities available at larger institutions. Similarly, contracts for Peace Corps training or for teacher institutes make it possible for many of our colleges to undertake educational programs that would otherwise be beyond their capacity.

As useful as these federally funded programs of research and service are, they do not provide funds needed to improve basic instruction. Federal funds for research or for the performance of a contract must be expended for a specific project or for the performance of specific services. Even where they may be spent for books and equipment, they must be spent for books and equipment related to specific areas of instruction. In the case of the Higher Education Facilities Act, federal funds may be spent for the construction of instructional facilities but they must be spent under highly specific conditions and for a specific building project.

Almost inevitably, the institution must decide how much of a commitment it wishes to make to a specific program if it intends to accept federal funds for the support of that program or for the performance of a contract. This in itself is not bad, but it offers a temptation to institutions to distort their programs in order to obtain federal support for them. As a result, some institutions have placed undue emphasis on those areas of instruction for which federal support was available.

The Association believes that the present pattern of federal spending for higher education through project grants should be supplemented by broad grants for instructional purposes to be expended at the discretion of the institution. Another way of putting this is to say that the federal government should make funds available to institutions in the form of income for general support, in addition to continuing to make grants for specific projects. Institutions have been responsible in their exercise of discretion in allocating federal funds for student aid. They have also been responsible in their choice of the instructional purposes on the basis of which they accept federal funds for construction of buildings. We believe that federal funds made available for instructional purposes, in the generally accepted definition of the term, and regarded as part of the general educational income of the institution, will be as prudently and as effectively expended as have federal funds hitherto made available on a project or contract basis.

If organized higher education as represented by the Association of American Colleges and others, is going to request a large federal outlay* for support of instruction, it must be ready to assure Congress and the public that colleges and universities will be accountable for these funds and will spend them prudently. Similarly, any proposal for federal support of general instructional functions must assure that funds made available to institutions are equitably distributed.

Accordingly, the Association suggests these guidelines for a federal program of institutional grants for support of instruction:

1. Federal institutional grants should be made to colleges and universities as institutions of higher education serving the general welfare. Such grants should be available without discrimination between public and private institutions.

2. Support should be available to all eligible institutions of higher education for expenditure at their discretion within the generally accepted definition of instructional services and departmental research. For some institutions this will mean improving the quality of the instruc-

* The total amount spent by American higher education for general instruction and departmental research is now approaching 4 billion dollars a year. To immediately improve quality in this area it is probably necessary to increase current expenditures by 25 per cent. To achieve this with federal funds would require an annual outlay of one billion dollars, an amount that will increase as higher education both continues to expand and to improve quality of instruction.

tional program by raising faculty salaries, or by funding post-doctoral research by junior members of the faculty, or by developing experimental curricula. For other institutions additional funds for instructional services will make possible the appointment of additional faculty to accommodate expanded enrollments, to improve faculty-student ratios, or to reduce class sizes.

Although support of instructional programs should be on a non-categorical basis, it would be advisable and also consistent with the provisions of section 401 (a) (2) of the Higher Education Facilities Act to exclude by explicit reference support for sectarian instruction and for courses taught in preparation for the ministry or for religious vocation.

3. In terms of purpose, institutional grants should support necessary quantitative expansion of higher education and should encourage, as well, qualitative improvement in instruction. To the maximum extent possible the amount of each institution's grant should be determined through objective formulas. Admittedly, objective formulas which will effectively encourage qualitative improvement in instruction are more subtle to devise than formulas bearing on quantitative expansion with their emphasis on enrollments and degrees granted. Nevertheless we believe the attempt should be made to recognize educational quality in apportioning grants to institutions.

4. To be eligible for an instructional support grant, the institution should be regionally accredited. To insist on accreditation as the minimum standard of qualification will insure, at the very least, that the grants are made to bona fide institutions of higher education. Excluded from eligibility will be a number of institutions that are also bona fide, at least to the extent of being listed in the official directory of the U. S. Office of Education. Many of these institutions are worthy of support, but this support should be of a special kind such as is now available for "developing" institutions. Institutions which have not yet achieved regional accreditation probably need proportionately larger amounts of financial assistance directed to specific needs if they are going to achieve accreditation. Once they have achieved accredited status, they will then be eligible for the general instructional support grants described in this proposal.

The Association suggests the above four points as guidelines rather than as absolute requirements. It believes that institutional grants for the support of instruction are the next logical development of federal support of higher education, though it recognizes that many of the present project grants and other special forms of support need to be con-

tinued. In short, institutional grants should supplement rather than supplant many of the kinds of federal support now available to colleges and universities.

Finally, the Association believes that federal institutional grants for the support of basic instruction offer the best prospect for sustaining and improving American colleges and universities. While we believe this to be true for both undergraduate and graduate levels of instruction, we believe it bears with special force and applicability upon the undergraduate college and its future. The Association is ready to cooperate with other educational organizations and with Congress and the executive agencies of the federal government in the development of specific proposals embodying the principles and guidelines set forth in this document.

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN COLLEGES

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